

Hawaii MARINE

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3rd Radio returns to K-Bay

Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson
Combat Correspondent

Imagine being away from your family for several months at a time in a dangerous combat situation, not knowing when you'll get to see your loved ones again. Marines in 3rd Radio Battalion know that feeling all too well.

Approximately 33 Marines

assigned to 3rd Radio Battalion returned to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Wednesday, after completing a deployment to Iraq where they served in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

When these Marines returned from the Battalion's third OIF deployment, they were wel-



comed home at their duty hut by family members, friends and fellow Marines.

"This ceremony is not business as usual. The Marines and Sailor who returned endured five months of combat operations," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Simmons, return and reunion staff noncommis-

sioned officer-in-charge, 3rd Radio Battalion. "The focus of our effort is the returning service members and their families. Each should feel a well-deserved 'job well done' for their sacrifice to the nation."

While in Iraq these Marines were all located in the Al Anbar Province and were collocated with the II Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters. 3rd Radio Battalion is a

general supporter of the MEF.

"The Marines left in early June, and the majority of them were signal intelligence Marines during deployment," said 1st Lt. Joseph O'Conner, S-3 officer, 3rd Radio Battalion. "But some of the other Marines helped with combat service support while deployed to Iraq."

See RADIO, A-7

Lava Dogs wrap up training

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondent

MARINE AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER, TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — The main body of 900-plus Lava Dogs from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, returned to their home duty station of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Wednesday and Thursday following a six-week, pre-deployment training evolution at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif. Deployment to these training areas was made to prepare them for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan where they will support Operation Enduring Freedom.

Additionally, more than 100 Marines who were training with and alongside the Distributed Operations platoon since July 8 at Fort Hunter Liggett, Jolon, Calif., were scheduled to arrive at Kaneohe Bay Thursday. The remaining 1/3 Marines in the rear party at Twentynine Palms are due to arrive back in Hawaii today.

"I am very proud of the Marines from this battalion," said 1/3 Commanding Officer Lt. Col. James Bierman, from Virginia. "These Marines have worked hard throughout this challenging training evolution. These guys are dirty; they've been either cold or hot the entire time; and they've been living off MREs (meals ready to eat), but the motivation and enthusiasm has been tremendous."

According to Master Gunnery Sgt. Carlos Craig, 1/3 operations chief and a native of Buffalo, N.Y., not only was the training 1/3 underwent these past six weeks some of the most rigorous he has ever seen in his 26-year



Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Navy hospital corpsmen from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, clear out of a helicopter's path while completing a casualty evacuation drill during the Battalion Field Exercise at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

career, it was also some of the most advanced.

"Usually, battalions are known for making history in combat, like (1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment) did when we took Fallujah," said Craig, describing the fight for the Iraqi city that has become, arguably, the most famous Marine Corps battle since Hue City during the Vietnam War. "But 1/3 also made history during this training deployment. Our Distributed Operations platoon is going to be the first such platoon sent into combat, when we deploy to Afghanistan, and 1/3's Marines were also the first to take part in Mojave Viper, (also known as

the combined arms training course), which recently replaced the old CAX (combined arms exercise). When you hear the phrase, 'Tip of the spear,' there's probably a good chance they're talking about 1/3."

A big part of being on the tip of that spear, according to Sgt. Maj. Michael Berg, 1/3 sergeant major, was the urban warfare training 1/3 underwent while at Twentynine Palms.

"The Marine Corps had two 'cities' built out here in the desert — the main city, Gardez, and another town to the north called Baraki Barak — complete with hundreds of actual role play-

ers from the Middle East, working alongside additional role players from the Marine Corps who grew beards and dressed as locals," said the Plymouth, N.H., native. "1/3 is the first battalion to go through this type of urban warfare training, which puts the Marines in some very realistic situations."

One of the reasons for the realism, in addition to the fact that there are 'friendlies' mixed together with 'insurgents,' is the fact that there are no pre-scripted scenarios.

See 1/3, A-5

2/3 Island Warriors prove no mountain is too tall

Sgt. Robert M. Storm
Combat Correspondent

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — Marines and Sailors assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, home based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, conducted Operation Pil in Watapor Valley, Afghanistan, from Oct. 16 to Sunday. The operation was conducted in order to improve security and assist in stabilizing the government in the troubled region.

For some, the campaign in Afghanistan has come to be thought of as "the other conflict," since the invasion of Iraq began. However, while the country remains sometimes dangerous and uncertain, steps toward a peaceful and stable government are being made.

Operation Pil was the latest mission launched by the Marines and Sailors that was aimed at improving security within the problem areas of the region.

"We didn't find much during this operation, but it was still good to show the villagers an Island Warrior presence," said Sgt. Curtis D. Magee, machinegunner, from Collins, Miss. "For our part of the mission, we had to hike up over 5,000 feet to a mountain top, but it was good for us to do that stuff. It's what we need to do as infantry, staying out in the field and accomplishing whatever mission we're assigned."

The Marines sustained little enemy contact

throughout the operation with the exception of Camp Blessing, a remote Marine Corps outpost in Afghanistan. Blessing received indirect mortar fire from anti-coalition militia. The Marine task force called an air strike against the ACM. Afterward, Marines and Sailors conducted a battle-damage assessment.



In support of the operation, 2/3 Marines and Sailors deployed to accomplish various missions throughout Kunar province.

"As the main effort, we were tasked with ascending a mountain in order to cordon and search the village of Tsangar. This village was an ACM safe haven for planning attacks against coalition forces," said 1st Lt.

John Bambey, platoon commander, from Cincinnati, Ohio. "The Marines and Sailors did a stellar job accomplishing the mission."

The presence of the Marines in areas of Afghanistan is supported by many of the local villages who have long been threatened and intimidated by the thuggish tactics of the ACM. The United States leads a multinational force with about 20,000 troops pursuing ACM in Afghanistan. Noticeable progress has been made with the government in allowing free elections and the building of schools, hospitals and roads as provinces continue to improve their infrastructure.

Fight night



Sgt. Joseph A. Lee

Sgt. Steve Byrnes, chief martial arts instructor for Regimental Schools, is scheduled to fight his first Icon Sports Superbrawl fight at the Blaisdell Arena tonight at 7 p.m. Currently sporting an undefeated Mixed Martial Arts record of 3-0, Byrnes will be fighting 3-6 MMA fighter Bob Ostovich immediately following intermission. The main event on the card is Falaniko Vitale versus Jason "Mayhem" Miller.

Trick-or-treating hours will be 6 to 9 p.m., Monday. Haunted House hours are 7 to 10 p.m. today, Saturday and Sunday.



NEWS BRIEFS

State Alert to Sound Tuesday

The State Civil Defense monthly test of sirens and the Emergency Alert System will be held Tuesday at 11:45 a.m. The siren test is a steady 45-second tone, used to alert the public of emergencies that pose or may pose a threat to life and property.

Headquarters Battalion Haunted House

The Headquarters Battalion Haunted House will be open today, Saturday and Sunday from 7 to 10 p.m. The house is located in Pless Hall, next to the Thrift Shop.

The cost is \$3 for visitors 16 and older and \$2 for those 15 and younger.

For more information about the Haunted House, make sure to read the On Point section (page D-1) in this issue of Hawaii Marine.

Trick-or-Treating Hours Set for 6 to 9 P.M.

Hours for trick-or-treating aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay will be 6 to 9 p.m., Monday. Representatives from the Provost Marshall's Office as well as Base Safety will be patrolling Base Housing during these hours to ensure optimum safety and security for trick or treaters.

Tripler to X-ray Halloween Candy

Trick-or-treaters can stop by Tripler Army Medical Center's Department of Radiology on Halloween and Tuesday to have their treats X-rayed. This service is available to eligible military beneficiaries.

The Department of Radiology, on the third floor of the medical center, will be open Monday from 8 to 11 p.m. for "goblin, princess and clown" family members to stop by and again 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday.

Anyone wishing to have their treats examined should report to the X-ray reception area. Patients do have priority, so there may be a wait. An adult must accompany children.

Parents are reminded that X-rays will primarily show metallic objects within the candy or the treats. X-rays cannot detect whether other potential harmful substances, such as fine glass, liquids, powders or chemical contaminants have been added to the treats.

Parents are urged to check their children's treats to guard against tampering.

Veterans Day Events at Battleship Missouri

At noon on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, the Battleship Missouri Memorial will hold a moment of silence to recognize those service members who have given their lives.

In addition, the memorial is extending complimentary admission and flag-raising privileges throughout Veterans Day to all American veterans, including active duty personnel, Reservists and National Guard members.

All visitors will also receive a button that commemorates the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, which was celebrated Sept. 2.

To take advantage of the complimentary admission offer, veterans must present a valid military ID or discharge papers at the admission window. Veterans can go directly to the ship's Signal Bridge, 03 level, to raise flags or report to the memorial's pier-side Victory Store for more instructions. Veterans are welcomed to bring their personal flag to raise or purchase one at the store. A certificate of presentation is also available for a small cost. The buttons will be available to all visitors at the Victory Store.

For more information on the Battleship Missouri Memorial, call Keith DeMello at 531-0244.

Important Phone Numbers

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110

Hawaii MARINE

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MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii 96863
E-MAIL: EDITOR@HAWAIIIMARINE.COM
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Promoting safety



Brig. Gen. Steven Hummer (right), commanding general, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, presents Mervin "Bo" Irvine, director, Base Safety, with the Navy 2005 Safety Excellence Award during the morning colors ceremony held Friday at the base flag pole.

Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson

Commanders gather in Hawaii

Sgt. Danielle M. Bacon

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii — Senior leaders from around the Pacific came together for the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific Commanders Conference, which kicked off at The Officers' Club aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Oct. 17.

The two-day conference gave all U.S. MarForPac major subordinate commanders the opportunity to discuss the direction Pacific forces will head in the next 15 years.

"The overarching importance of thinking about and planning for the future just can't be overstated," said Commander of Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area Brig. Gen. Carl B. Jensen. "We have to do everything now to posture the Corps for successfully waging tomorrow's battles and to ensure that our basing and training plan supports the future war fight."

Topics such as command strategy, command relationships, noncommissioned officer development, and future basing requirements throughout the Pacific were a few of the many focuses that were addressed during the conference.

"The intellectual investment this group is paying today will pay substantial dividends downrange," Jensen said. "We've got to get this right, because ultimately, this is about taking care of Marines so they can take care of their country."

Invitations were extended to senior leaders and spouses from the 14 commands of MarForPac. Participants included commanding officers, sergeants major, the I and III Marine Expeditionary Forces command master chiefs as well as spouses.

"It is imperative that we think out loud, where ideas are being sought and able to put everything out on the table," said Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, commander of I MEF.

"We are doing something here. We

are trying to come up with avenues to better train our NCOs," said Sgt. Major Lawrence E. Thompson, MarForPac sergeant major. "The system isn't broken, but it could use some improvements."

See PACIFIC, A-7



Sgt. Danielle M. Bacon

Lt. Gen. John F. Goodman (right), commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, addresses senior leaders and their spouses during a commanders conference, Oct. 18. The two-day event gave all MarForPac major subordinate commanders the opportunity to discuss the direction forces in the Pacific will head in the next 15 years.

All about synergy



Cpl. Rich Mattingly

During his tour of Marine Corps Air Facility last week, Vice Adm. Wally Massenburg (center), commander, Naval Air System Command, paused to get information on how Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24 is implementing the Navy's Naval Aviation Readiness Integrated Improvement and Enterprise AIRSpeed productivity programs and tools with several Marines and Sailors, including Petty Officer 1st Class Joseph Bell (left), a metrology and calibration workcenter supervisor with MALS-24 and Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Hopkins, precision measuring equipment chief also with MALS-24. Enterprise AIRSpeed is helping Marines and Sailors in the logistics squadrons utilize modern logistics and supply concepts in order to improve combat readiness. Enterprise AIRSpeed promises to update and synergistically cross-integrate what have been, at times, all-too-separate segments of the logistics squadrons.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — partly cloudy becoming mostly cloudy; isolated showers in the early morning; easterly winds at 10 to 12 mph with isolated gusts to 18 mph

Night — mostly cloudy to cloudy conditions; scattered rain showers; winds to decrease slightly to 8 to 10 mph with gusts to 15 mph

High — 83 Low — 73

Saturday



Day — mostly to partly cloudy skies throughout the day; scattered rain showers during the morning hours; easterly winds at 10 to 15 mph

Night — mostly cloudy skies; easterly winds to decrease to 7 to 10 mph

High — 83
Low — 74

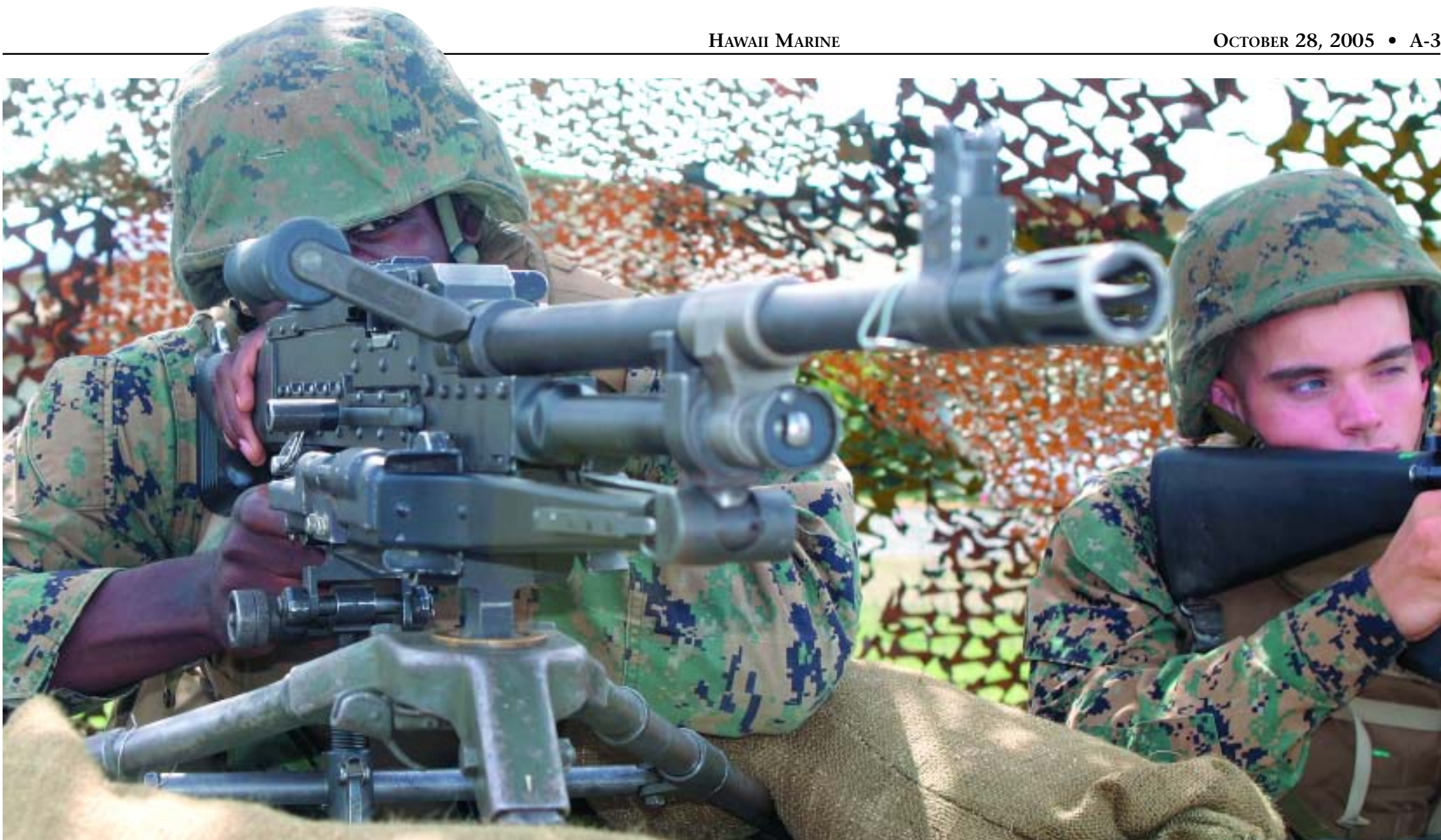
Sunday



Day — partly to mostly cloudy skies with isolated morning showers; easterly winds at 10 to 12 mph with gusts to 16 mph

Night — partly to mostly cloudy skies with isolated showers during the early morning hours; easterly winds at 7 to 10 mph

High — 83 Low — 75



Lance Cpl. Karim H. Baker, optics technician, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, guards the entry control point with an M240 machine gun during COC X training, Oct. 19, at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, K-Bay.

Securing the wire

3/3 participates in daylong Combat Operations Center Exercise

Story and Photos By
Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson
Combat Correspondent

Marines from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, “America’s Battalion,” underwent a Combat Operations Center Exercise, Oct. 19, on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, to prepare them for their upcoming deployment.

The exercise was to teach the Marines how to provide a secure environment in and around a Combat Operations Center.

“We’re going to be out here doing the training until about 10 p.m.,” said Sgt. Kevin A. Bogwell, 3/3, Nuclear Biological Chemical chief. “We want to prepare the Marines for some of the things they’re going to see when we get to Iraq.”



Pfc. Jonathen B. Jones (left), radio operator, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, searches Lance Cpl. Joe M. Orth, intelligence analyst, 3/3, during their Combat Operations Center Exercise training held Oct. 19, at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

The training consisted of Marines conducting vehicle checkpoints and entry checkpoints, said Bogwell.

“We really want to sharpen our skills for combat,” said Bogwell, a Littleton, N.H. native. “Once it gets dark outside, the Marines standing watch will be using light and noise discipline so they can hear what is going on around them.”

Bogwell explained how COC X training coincides with the platoon evaluations Marines are currently going through.

“This kind of training addresses the weak points of their combat abilities that we may need to work on before evaluations,” said 25-year-old, Bogwell. “It’s really good training and is very effective. It’s good and realistic, but only the Marines who push themselves and want to get a lot out of it will.”

Marines set up a COC forward at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows.

“In a real situation, we would press forward to the Marines that were sent ahead of us or, in this case, behind the evolution in Bellows,” said Bogwell. “But this training is being operated from a fixed site. The command operation center still allows the commanding officer to make contact with Marines who went forward or who are in the rear.”

An estimated 85 Marines, staged in two different locations, were included in the COC X training. Thirty-five Marines were at the Bellows locations, according to Bogwell.

The Marines at the checkpoint at Bellows explain how they conducted their training.

“We’re working the checkpoints in shifts,” said Lance Cpl. Karim H. Baker, optics technician, 3/3. “Every four hours, another Marine comes and relieves us of our post, and we get time to rest and eat chow. Then, four hours later, it’s back to work.”

According to Bogwell, the Marines had wire set up around the entire perimeter, which was at least 50 meters from the headquarters for the COC.

“We do this so it gives us a chance to see the point of origin — in case we take on any indirect fire,” said Bogwell. “We also have a guardian angel or an ‘outlook Marine’ to look over the area. He’s in a hidden area that no one knows about, so it’s like a surprise.”

The Marines participating in the COC X training are all from different sections of 3/3. According to Bogwell, the level of excitement was a little too low for his taste.

“We’re kind of hoping for someone who isn’t authorized to surprise us and try and come through the gates,” said Bogwell. “It would be a lot more life-like, because we wouldn’t know about it. We just want the Marines to be as prepared as possible for the deployment, so this training is going to be a full, get ready to rock evolution.”



Master Sgt. Ron Rice, operations chief, America’s Battalion, works in the Combat Operations Center during a training exercise in order to communicate with Marines sent forward, Oct. 19, at K-Bay.



Marines from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, stand guard at the entry check point in order to make sure no one enters without proper authority Oct. 19, during the regiment’s training exercise on Marine Corps Base Hawaii Kaneohe Bay. An estimated 85 Marines, staged in two different locations, were included in the COC X training.

On the skyline ... with 1/3

by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

On the Skyline is a weekly column written by Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Combat Correspondent Sgt. Joe Lindsay. Lindsay is currently deployed with the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment to

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., where 1/3 is undergoing training to prepare them for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Ammo technician learned much from life in the rear

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER, TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — There are many stories of Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, who distinguished themselves on the battlefield in Iraq with valor and bravery.

These 1/3 Marines, along with all American and coalition forces service members serving on the front lines, deserve the thanks of a grateful nation for putting their lives on the line and, in some cases, giving their lives so that the United States and other countries of the world can be free.

But often forgotten amongst these brave souls are the ones serving back on the home front. One such Marine is Cpl. Roberto Mundo, a 1/3 ammunition technician who was assigned to remain at Kaneohe Bay during the Lava Dogs’ last combat deployment.

“At first, I was disappointed not to deploy with the rest of the Lava Dogs to Iraq,” remarked Mundo, who spent his formative years growing up in Carolina, Puerto Rico, before relocating with his family to Columbia, S.C. “But, I figured if I couldn’t be at war with them, then the least I could do was my part back at home helping them.”

As Mundo points out, “There wasn’t too much need for an ammo tech back at (1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment) in K-Bay, since most all of 1/3 Marines were fighting in Iraq, so I was assigned to help out with rear liaison issues.”

Those issues included rerouting mail to the Marines in Iraq, aiding in correcting pay problems, managing the barracks, and assisting new joins.

But of all his collateral duties, Mundo said, none meant as much to him as helping wounded Marines upon their return to Hawaii, and even more so, serving as a liaison to the families of Marines who were wounded or killed.

“When wounded 1/3 Marines came back to Hawaii, it was pretty much my job to take care of them,” commented Mundo. “Myself, the key volunteers, the regimental CO (commanding officer) and XO (executive officer), and any 1/3 Marine who could be spared would meet the wounded Marines at the airport and get



Cpl. Roberto Mundo, an ammunition technician who spent his formative years growing up in Carolina, Puerto Rico, before relocating with his family to Columbia, S.C., stands guard at an ammunition supply point at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

them situated back at base. From there, it was my job to basically be there for them, to get them whatever they needed and to take them back and forth to all their doctors’ appointments. It was an honor for me.”

However, as much as being chosen to work with 1/3’s Purple Heart veterans honored Mundo, he said serving as a liaison to the families of the 1/3 Marines wounded or killed in Iraq was the greatest honor of all.

“Some of the families of Marines who were wounded or killed didn’t speak any English,” said Mundo. “One family even came directly to K-Bay from Mexico. Having grown up in Puerto Rico, Spanish is my first language, so I was chosen as the liaison for these families. I served as an interpreter, translator and escort, showing them around the base and accompanying them to military functions such as memorial services.”

“All of these families, despite the hardships and pain they were going through, treated me like a son,” recalled Mundo. “No matter what I do in the rest of my Marine Corps career, I’m

not sure if I will ever do anything as important or as meaningful as that. It was a truly humbling experience. The families I came in touch with are so brave and strong, just like the children they raised who became Marines.”

Though Mundo’s experience in the rear during 1/3’s last deployment to Iraq is one that he said he will remember for the rest of his life, he added that “I am glad to be going with the guys on our upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.”

“Right now I am in my MOS (military occupational specialty) doing the job the Marine Corps trained me to do — making sure the grunts (infantry Marines) have the ammo they need to accomplish the mission,” said Mundo. “There are a lot of logistical aspects to being an ammo tech. We get orders for ammo, secure vehicles and make sure they are set up for ammo transportation, pick up the amount and types of ammo requested, count it and verify that it is correct, get it to the grunts and set up ASPs (ammo supply points) closer to the action. We are also entrusted with guarding the ammo and distributing it.”



According to Staff Sgt. Victor Olivares, 1/3 logistics chief and an Iraq veteran, Mundo’s job is a vital one.

“A Marine can have the best and most sophisticated weapons on the planet, but without ammo all those weapons aren’t going to do the Marines a bit of good,” said the Arleta, Calif., native. “Ammo techs keep our Marines in the fight. Corporal Mundo has a lot of responsibility, but we know we can count on him to get the job done. When he is given a mission, it gets accomplished. He’s doing a great job.”

Lance Cpl. Jack Hunter, a 1/3 mortarman and Iraq veteran, said he couldn’t agree more.

“Without our ammo we are pretty much useless,” said the St. Louis native. “As grunts, we all respect our ammo techs that are locked on, because they are with us wherever we go taking care of us. We’ve accepted Corporal Mundo as one of our own, which isn’t something that happens over night with the grunts, but he has proven himself over the past month on our live-fire pre-deployment exercise to Twentynine Palms, that he is someone we can count on.”

Lance Cpl. Marc McGarry, a 1/3 rifleman from Rockland, Mass., spoke of Mundo in a similar vein.

“Corporal Mundo is down and dirty with us,” said McGarry, who is preparing to make his first combat deployment. “He works hard. For example, the other night I came off guard duty at 0100 (1 a.m.) and Corporal Mundo was sorting ammo. When I woke up at 0500 (5 a.m.) he was already up working on another task. Nothing is ever messed up with our ammo because he is so locked on. We see him working hard for us and we respect that. Everyone here is glad he is deploying to Afghanistan with the rest of the grunts.”

For his part, Mundo reiterated that although he will never forget the time he spent in the rear during 1/3’s last Iraq deployment, he is thankful to be going with 1/3 on their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“I wouldn’t want to miss out on serving with these outstanding Marines from 1/3 in Afghanistan, and I’m glad I am going, but at the same time, I now have a greater appreciation for what the Marines are doing back at home,” said Mundo. “We are all doing our part.”

1/3, From A-1

“Things can go good for the Marines, or they can go bad, depending on how the Marines react to given situations,” said Nada Rammo, an Iraqi-American linguist who served as an interpreter and translator for 1/3 during the urban warfare training evolution.

“Most of the role players are actually from Middle Eastern countries and only Arabic is spoken by them during the training, so this is a great opportunity for Marines to see the culture of real life in Iraq or Afghanistan.”

The urban warfare training in Gardez and Baraki Barak was part of 1/3’s battalion field exercise, a culminating event that began Friday and ended Monday evening.

One of the first events of the exercise was a town hall meeting between Bierman and other key 1/3 personnel with the mayor, police chief, Afghan Army commander, imam (mosque prayer leader), and other tribal leaders of Gardez and Baraki Barak.

“We simulated a relief in place of another Marine battalion and basically had an initial meeting to establish relationships and build rapport with the local leaders and sheiks,” said Bierman. “From there, we had subsequent meetings that were more focused on the details of how we were going to work with them to establish security. The local leaders were upset over the fact that their children couldn’t go to school because of the violence in the city.

“They agreed to the fact that there will be a constant Marine patrolling presence in their town, and we reached an agreement on a weapons buy-back program, where it was agreed that each Afghani family could maintain one rifle per household, but must turn in all rockets and machine guns.

“We also talked about them identifying civil affair projects for us — hospitals, schools, and other projects — that we could help them build or restore, once they put together a prioritized list for us.

“At one point, the imam was concerned that the curfew times we requested would interfere with morning prayers, so we accommodated him by changing the curfew hours and emphasized to them that we wanted to conduct our operations in a way that respects the locals.”

Bierman also pointed out that the realism of the urban warfare training was perhaps its strongest suit.

“We have to figure out for ourselves who the good guys and bad guys are,” remarked Bierman. “In the initial meetings, we’re being cordial and polite, but we’re watching everyone very closely. We are being professional, but we are doing this with our eyes wide open.

“This training is very important,” concluded Bierman. “The simple goal of this training is that the Marines in 1/3 will not encounter any situation in Afghanistan that they haven’t had

a chance to work through and train for.”

Part of the necessity for going through the evolution with “eyes wide open,” according to Berg, is the unique situation facing Marines in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“The most important thing for the Marines to take away from this training is that they understand the local cultures and that they understand we’re there to provide security and certain needs that the locals have, and yet knowing at the same time that amongst the locals hide the insurgents, and the bad guys that are trying to kill us,” commented Berg.

“The Marines have got to be able to flip that switch from the friendliest friend to the man that’s gonna put a bullet right between your eyes and kill you dead on the spot.”

“Like the saying goes, ‘No better friend; no worse enemy.’ I think the Marines — out of all the services — are the best adapted for that, where we can show our kind-heartedness to the locals. That’s the way Marines are. We have two sides. We have a soft side, and we’ve got an extremely hard, serious side that you don’t want to mess with.”

1st Sgt. Jerry Fowler, Alpha Company first sergeant, 1/3, from Moore, Okla., said the Marines of 1/3 are up to the challenge.

Marines from 1/3 have received some of the best training the Marine Corps has to offer these past couple of months explained Fowler. “Now it’s time to put that training to use (in Afghanistan).”

Many of Fowler’s Marines in Alpha Company seemed to echo their first sergeant’s sentiments.

“I can’t wait to get to Afghanistan,” said Pfc. Danilo Osorio, a 1/3 rifleman from Houston.

“The training we got at Bridgeport and here at Twentynine Palms, with the Afghani city and everything, is the best training I’ve ever had or even heard of, for that matter. I feel ready. We all do.”

“Nobody is going through the motions out here,” added Pfc. Daniel Breen, a 1/3 rifleman from Boston.

“We are doing training that we know we are going to use. Everything has been so realistic. It has been hard training, but no matter what we end up doing later in life, we can all look back years from now on the times we spent with 1/3 and say to ourselves, ‘What I’m doing now ain’t so hard. I’ve done tougher things. I once served with 1/3.’ That means something to us.”

Cpl. Matthew Schenkenfelder, a 1/3 combat engineer from Harrogate, Tenn., said he could attest to the strenuous training regime.

“I did two tours in Iraq, and outside of combat, I don’t think they could have made it much tougher as far as training goes,” said Schenkenfelder.

“During this whole deployment, we were always doing something. We were always on the move. There was no time for anything but training. We might get a quick

break to eat chow or go to the head (restroom), but that was about it. We’re ready as a battalion for Afghanistan, now. We still need to sustain back in Hawaii, but we’re ready. I couldn’t say the same thing that first day in Bridgeport.”

Lance Cpl. Vann Magruder, a 1/3 combat engineer from Huntsville, Mo., said this pre-deployment training exercise has brought the Marines of 1/3 closer together.

“When we first got to Bridgeport, it seemed like the assaultmen stayed off to themselves; the machine gunners stayed off to themselves; the engineers stayed off to themselves and so on and so on. Now it feels like were more like a family — like a big team. The unit cohesion has really come together and the camaraderie among us all is outstanding.”

For his part, Craig said witnessing the battalion progress by “leaps and bounds” during this deployment reminded him of his days on the drill field.

“Oh my goodness!” exclaimed Craig, when asked how far the battalion had come over the past six weeks.

“Watching the guys at Bridgeport during mountain warfare training that first day, I felt like I was forming up a platoon at boot camp. We went all the way back to the basics and broke ‘em down so we could build ‘em back up again. Now, finishing up our training during the Battalion FEX at Twentynine Palms is like the third phase of boot camp. We’re gonna polish and sustain in Hawaii to get them ready for the final graduation. That graduation will be when we touch ground in Afghanistan and get the ball rolling. We’ve come along way.”



Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Marines from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, provide security while keeping a watchful eye on possible avenues of approach in one of the training areas at Twentynine Palms, Calif., replicated to resemble a Middle Eastern town.

Postcards from the front

Compiled by Sgt. Robert Storm



Editor's note: Marines and Sailors of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, are currently deployed to Afghanistan from their home base at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. Recently, Sgt. Robert Storm, a Marine Corps combat correspondent, gathered notes and took photographs of K-Bay Marines, which Hawaii Marine is proud to share.



Sgt. Alfredo Castro, chief cook, from Chicago

“To my mom and dad, I miss you and will be back soon. To my friends in K-Bay, see you soon and God bless.”



Staff Sgt. Ronald A. Nicholas, dining facility manager, from Trinidad

“I’ll be home soon. I miss you Camilla, Shomari and Alex.”

Four chefs compete for quarterly title

Pfc. Edward C. deBree
Combat Correspondent

Three Marines and one Sailor competed for the title of Chef of the Quarter, Friday, at Anderson Hall on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

Sgt. William Mitchell, Cpl. David J.

Washington Jr., Lance Cpl. Christopher Perna, and Seaman Harold Wallace competed against each other by cooking food that was judged and served to guests who attended the cook-off.

According to the chefs, they went through a qualifying process before they reached the cook-off phase.

“There are three events to the Chef of the

Quarter,” said Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Yantosca, production manager, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. “The first event was a 100-question written test that included knowledge on garrison food and field food. The second event was an oral board that tested them on basic Marine Corps or Navy knowledge, and the third event is the cook-off.”

The competition started off with 10 cooks at the beginning. Three were dropped during the written-test stage and three were dropped during the oral testing, said Yantosca. The cook-off then consisted of the four finalists who scored high enough to continue the competition.

The last event is set up on the same premise as the television show, “Iron Chef,” said Yantosca. On the day of the cook-off, the cooks arrived early in the morning to prepare their menus, which were graded and approved by chief cooks. The cooks were watched over by staff noncommissioned officers who took note of the techniques they used and how they prepared their dishes.

Judges then tasted the food in order to decide which was the overall winner of the Chef of the Quarter competition, said Yantosca. The judges scored the entrées based on taste, theme, creativity, presentation and professionalism. During the ceremony, the cooks served their dishes to guests who attended for the event.

After guests finished their meals, the winner of the Chef of the Quarter competition was announced. The winner for the fourth-quarter was Washington.

“I came in at 5 p.m. last night to begin my menu,” said Washington. “My girlfriend influenced the theme, because she is really into themes. I couldn’t have done it without her.”

Washington’s theme was a pirate theme that included Land Lubber’s pasta, pepper salad, garlic bread and an apple treat.

A lot of planning and heart went into the preparation, and it was an honor for them to get that far, said Mitchell.

“I can’t wait to do the same job with 3/3 in Iraq,” said Washington, noting that he’s going to take all of his knowledge with him on his deployment with ‘America’s Battalion.”

The winner of each Chef of the Quarter competition goes on to compete for the title of Chef of the Year, said Yantosca.

Remaining optimistic, the lone Sailor in the competition said that he is not in the least discouraged with the outcome of this quarter’s competition.

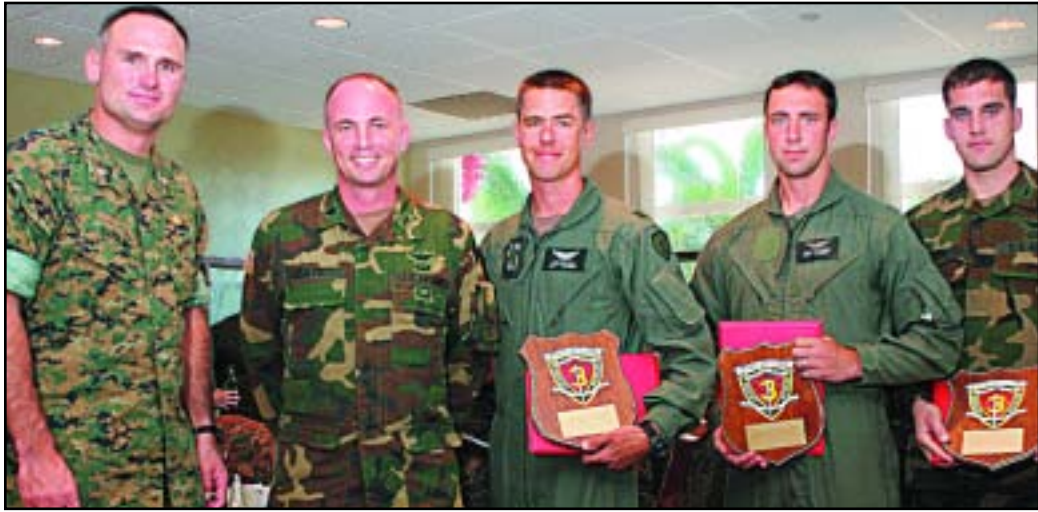
Wallace remarked, “Maybe next time I’ll come out on top.”



Pfc. Edward C. deBree

Cpl. David Washington Jr., 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, smiles as he holds the trophy he received after winning the Chef of the Quarter competition, Friday, at Anderson Hall. Other cooks competing were Sgt. William Mitchell (left), Lance Cpl. Christopher Perna, and Seaman Harold Wallace.

All in the same fight ...



Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Lt. Col. Norm Cooling (left), battalion commander, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, stands with Army Lt. Col. Frank Tate (second from left), battalion commander, 2-25th Aviation Squadron, Task Force Diamond Head, and three of his pilots after Cooling presented them with awards at The Officers’ Club aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, last week. The soldiers had come to the aid of “America’s Battalion” both during the battalion’s deployment to Afghanistan and, more recently, during 3/3’s training at Pohakuloa Training Area on the Big Island. “Our relationship started in Afghanistan,” said Tate, whose pilots flew thousands of flight hours in direct support of America’s Battalion. “When we all came back to the same island, it

was only natural to keep that relationship going.” Recently, it was that relationship that kept artillery training going for 3/3 on the Big Island. “At the eleventh hour, we needed more ammunition, and we knew who we could count on them to help us get it,” said Cooling. “It’s the same kind of ‘above and beyond’ support we got in Afghanistan.” “We know that wherever we go, Marines and soldiers are going to fight together,” added Tate. “We will continue to work with the Marines here to aid them in any way we can, and I know they’ll do the same for us.” America’s Battalion continues to train for an upcoming deployment to Iraq next year.

RADIO, From A-1

Another of their taskings was to provide communication support for II MEF. “These Marines were actually just a small portion of the battalion in Iraq,” said Simmons. According to Simmons, the rest of the battalion, which is about 175 Marines and Sailors, is scheduled to come back at a later date. While deployed, 3rd Radio Battalion’s main mission was to conduct signal intelligence and electronic warfare in support of II MEF. “It was interesting — getting to put all of our training to work,” admitted Pfc. Brad C. Fisher, Arabic linguist, for the battalion. “We were able to see the results of our training firsthand.” Aside from the work, being in Iraq had its ups and downs, explained Fisher. “It was rough being away

from my girlfriend and family,” said David E. Toledana, Arabic linguist. “Another thing was weekends. I missed them a lot. We worked 12 hours or more everyday, so we never really got much down time.” Toledana, a Metairie, La. native, explained how he would enjoy being deployed again and looks forward to future deployments. “Even though we didn’t get to shower for long stretches of time, I still enjoyed being deployed,” said 25-year-old Toledana. “It was a good experience and was good, because it actually felt like I was doing something.”

PACIFIC, From A-2

Development of young Marines was on the minds of all the senior enlisted as they debated over formal schools and indoctrination at different ranks. The active duty leaders were not the only ones working hard. Their spouses attended a MarForPac command brief, participated in an orientation of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and visited the Fisher House at Tripler Army Medical Center. “This is a great opportunity to not only meet with the other wives, but also to give input that could ultimately improve the lives of Marines and their families,” said Zoe Trautman, the spouse of Brig. Gen. George J. Trautman, commander of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. In one brief, the commanders, sergeants major and spouses learned about a possible base relocation and the concerns that would be involved. Each group was tasked by Lt. Gen. John F. Goodman, MarForPac commander, to come up with their “redline” — the line drawn as to the needs of Marines and their families. “What do we need and where?” asked Goodman. “How do we support the Marines and their family? There are 215,000 Marines and their spouses that have opinions as to what they need. We need to take those opinions and filter them and come up with a redline.” After the meetings were over, many spouses had praises for everything that was covered. “I think it is very valuable when we include the families and their input,” said Bonnie Dungan, the spouse of Col. Mark A. Dungan, Headquarters Battalion, MarForPac commanding officer. “This was the best and most worthwhile conference that I have attended since graduate school. The opportunity for our voices to be heard makes a big difference.”